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# SERVICE

# NEWS

ISSUED FOR THE STAFF OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION  
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October 23, 1940

No. 1.

## WASHINGTON • CORRESPONDENT

LAST issue, we indicated what Service News would try to do in giving you information about the defense program. Here's the first "take" -- most of a

background statement prepared especially for U. S. D. A. employees by Chester Davis, Agricultural Commissioner, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. In the next issue there'll be a statement by Secretary Wickard on "Agriculture's Part in Total Defense".

This is Mr. Davis:

"The President has appointed the National Defense Advisory Commission to coordinate the program to make this country invulnerable in a military sense. That job is proceeding with real vigor and the progress that has been made in the past four months is encouraging. Basically, the Commission's job is to assist the military establishments in procuring planes, tanks, guns and uniforms for an army of 1,200,000 men and equipment sufficient for an additional 800,000, in building a two-ocean navy and in providing the United States a total minimum air force of 25,000 fighting planes.

"The responsibility of the defense commission, however, goes beyond the gigantic task of participating in the procurement of some 14 billions of dollars of war material. The President, mindful of the lessons of the past, is determined that in the marshaling of America's resources for defense the interest of all groups of our society shall be given consideration. In addition to specialists in the fields of raw materials and production, the defense commission has coordinate representation on behalf of labor, agriculture and the consumer. Another commissioner has been charged with the special responsibility of determining the impact of defense preparations and international developments upon our price structure and the economic system in general and in formulating programs to correct unfavorable tendencies.

"The responsibilities assigned to the several divisions of the commission give evidence of the fact that this nation is trying to profit by past experiences and to so organize the defense program as to minimize the shock to our economic system when the emergency is over. My job, as I conceive it, is to determine in what way agriculture can cooperate to the fullest extent with the defense program and at the same time to aid in the development of policies which will maintain the agricultural plant in a healthy, productive condition.

"Most of us remember, all too clearly, the eagerness with which farmers responded to the 'Food Will Win the War' slogan in 1917. Agricultural leadership still thinks in terms of the economic headache and the soil erosion damage which followed that emergency period. This we wish to avoid in our effort to keep war away from this continent. Planning and organization might have prevented the hangover after 1918. We now have the opportunity to minimize disastrous effects of world conditions this time if we are sufficiently far-sighted.

"I repeat what I have stated often during the past four months:

"Agriculture's responsibility in this crisis is the same as that of all other American interests -- to make resources and manpower available for defense purposes. America's farmers are perhaps better prepared than any other group to meet that responsibility. Agriculture does not have to expand its production to meet whatever demands the future may bring. There is an abundance of food and fiber for civilian requirements and military needs. But because farmers have always produced abundantly, their economic future is complicated by loss of export markets. Additional measures may be necessary to prevent the loss of these markets from impairing agriculture's ability to continue to produce.

"I have taken the position that no defense program can succeed if farm prices and farm income are not maintained at the level that will keep the farm plant healthy. Adjustments in agriculture are already under way and developments beyond our control will almost surely result in additional far reaching changes. The producers of many export crops, including cotton, tobacco, wheat, lard, fresh and dried fruits, and naval stores, have lost, at least temporarily, a large part of their export markets. The defense program itself through increased industrial activity will contribute to an increased domestic demand for many farm commodities, including some export products. For a time the Government can protect the producers of these crops against the effects of this loss by commodity loans, but if export outlets continue to be restricted, obviously many producers sooner or later will have to turn to something else.

"Farmers must be alert for information that will lead to an understanding of the reasons for the defense effort and how world developments are likely to affect the market for their products. Every effort should be made to supply information as it becomes available, but each

individual will need to interpret this information in terms of his own particular problems. If this is done, farmers will be prepared to make such shifts in their operations as are necessary in order to maintain a health farm plant. At the same time governmental agencies will need to be alert and prepared to assist in every way possible.

"I can assure you that in the defense program itself all reasonable steps will be taken to minimize the agricultural distress that will result from the changed market conditions. We are striving, for example, for the maximum possible decentralization of new defense industries not only because it is sound practice for the country as a whole but because of its importance to agriculture. Decentralized industry brought close to rural areas means jobs for low income farmers and a diversified new market for farm products. But this factor cannot completely alleviate the conditions brought about by lost markets. New and additional steps may be indicated. Individual producers and farm leaders, in government and out, should be giving constant attention to the implications of the new economic environment in which agriculture may find itself. But, above all, we must never forget that in face of fast-moving developments throughout the world, our single purpose is to maintain democracy here at whatever cost or sacrifice."

### CHIEF TELLS OF TRIP

Highlights of a swing across the country, as presented by the Chief to a meeting of the Washington staff, October 7:

A Maine potato field that had lost three feet of soil between this visit and one 32 years ago.

Talks with two great scientists--at Lake George, New York, with Dr. Irving Langmuir, 1932 Nobel chemistry prize winner; at Pasadena, California, with Dr. Robert Millikan, 1933 Nobel physics prize winner. Both were keenly interested in soil conservation and the work of the SCS.

Water flow studies and other research of vital importance at the experimental laboratory, California Institute of Technology, revealing among other things, that certain concentrations of suspended sediment in water tend to increase the rate of flow.

Excellent work at the Pullman, Washington nursery, where 7 highly promising grasses and 1 legume with great possibilities in solving some of the vegetative-control problems of the Pacific Northwest have been found.

Nailing down California's "dust bowl" near San Bernardino, where the SCS has stopped erosion on 202,000 acres.

Civic organizations of Decatur, Illinois vitally concerned with erosion problems because factories had had to locate in some other town for want of adequate water in Decatur. A reservoir built 14 years ago had already lost 18 percent of its capacity.

An estimated saving of 2½ million dollars to Uncle Sam through conservation work in sand-dune country in Colorado. Construction of the Caddo Dam across the Arkansas River necessitated relocation of the Santa Fe Railway tracks on the south side of the river through sand-dune country. SCS technicians tied down the soil. (Before the railway would consent to selection of this route, the Government had to prove that the sand dunes could be controlled, or the railway tracks would have had to run on the north side of the river necessitating the construction of two costly bridges at Government expense.)

SCS-CCC camp at Sebastopol, California which has introduced an entirely new system of land use. Banks are now willing to extend credit to farmers at a time when many of them were about to lose their farms.

Forty families at Aguilar, Colorado. 38 of them on relief rolls, being made self-supporting through SCS help.

#### SCS AIDS DEFENSE PROGRAM

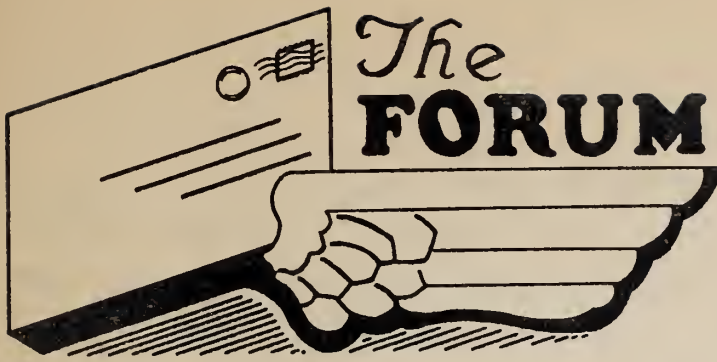
Approximately 500,000 acres of land adjacent to a number of Army training centers are being purchased for the War Department as part of the national defense program, by the Land Acquisition Division of the Service. The additional acreage will be used by the War Department to expand facilities needed for training purposes.

#### MOTION PICTURE RELEASED

"The Living Land", produced by the Service, can be used advantageously as a prologue to other pictures or for "setting the stage" at meetings and other occasions. It is a 5-minute picture based on the single idea that America needs land that is alive.

The music was composed especially for the picture by Hans Eisler, a Viennese composer who has written the scores for many documentary films both in this country and abroad. Oscar Levant of "Information Please" fame conducted the 8-piece orchestra which made the musical score.

Prints are available in 16 mm (approximately \$5.00) and 35 mm (\$9.00) sound only.



EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: I have just read your letter to yourself in the September 16 issue of the Service News. This prompts me to get a matter that has been on my mind for some time "off my chest".

#### PRINT IT ON THE LAND

It's time to rewrite farm plans. Sounds foolish, as some of them have

just been completed, but it is necessary. This is the season of the year to do just this and in a blitzkrieg style.

I fooled you that time. You thought I meant with pen and ink or typewriter. No, what I want to see is farm plans written on the land that can be seen from every hilltop, from every highway, from every field border, and from the end of each row -- to see them written down, using a terracing outfit, annual strip cropping, strips of permanent vegetation, perennial hay crops, reforestation, and wildlife practices, to spell out the words "SOIL CONSERVATION".

It pays to advertise, so we are told. Why not advertise the work of Soil Conservation Service by placing the advertisement where it will be seen by millions of our population in all walks of life -- out on the land itself where it really belongs. Let's place the ads in the form of all phases of the work, and plant them so thoroughly on the land that they will be lasting, indelible, anchored so securely that the wind will not blow them away nor the rains blot them out, and so that they may increase with time and be as nationally known and significant as the Wrigley chewing gum sign on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

SIGNED: L.F.F.

#### GOOD IDEA HERE

Robert Adcock, a district conservationist in Arkansas, has developed a unique plan of utilizing the aerial photograph sheet as the basis for a group approach in farm conservation planning. Each photograph sheet contains from a half-dozen to fifteen farms, all contiguous and the owners all known to each other. Mr. Adcock asks the leading farmers to get all the others who are interested in conservation farming into a group meeting to discuss conservation.

This group action has been a decided success in efficiency of time. The soil surveyor is enabled to survey all farms on the photograph sheet at one time. Land use capability maps may be developed for the entire area. General aspects of soil and moisture conservation measures may be presented to ten or twelve people in the same time as was formerly used for each individual.

Information on the likes, dislikes and abilities of each may be secured at the same time that economic data for development of a farm plan is secured. A definite date for individual assistance is made with each farmer.

This little development in the use of the aerial photo sheet is just one of the many ways in which we may use those things we have at our finger tips to better advantage.

#### FROM THE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS OF DISTRICTS

Nearly all of the semi-annual reports received from soil conservation districts are full of useful information. Space limitations make it impossible to print these reports in full, or even excerpts from all of them. But here are a few paragraphs, selected at random from two reports which seem to be of interest. Others will be carried in future issue of the NEWS - -

#### Greene County Crowley Ridge District, Arkansas:

"...Recently, with the help of local leaders, we instituted a Community Work execution plan for that part of the District in which CCC labor is being used. In this plan the local leaders arrange for a meeting of all cooperating farmers in their localities for the purpose of outlining the work to be done during a ten-work-day period. A representative from the CCC Camp, either the Camp Superintendent or the Foreman, attends the meeting and lists the jobs which each cooperating farmer indicates he is ready to start. All of the CCC enrollees, (two crews) with one foreman are then assigned to this community for a ten-work-day period, during which time the other foreman attends another such meeting and outlines work for the following work period. To be eligible for work during a period the farmer must either attend the meeting, send a representative, or send word by a neighbor stating the work he expects to do."

#### Lower Chattahoochee River District, Georgia:

"In the fall of 1939 as a preliminary step to the formulation of a program of work and a work plan for the District, the county program planning committees in each county, under the guidance of the Extension Service, selected four leading and typical farms to be developed for the purpose of demonstrating the practices that go to make up a completely coordinated soil conservation plan.

"After these farms were selected the Soil Conservation Service was called in to make conservation survey maps of the farms and to assist the local group, and the landowners, with the development and execution of a plan.

"The discussions arising during the development of these plans, plus the demonstrational value of the practices established, have gone a long way toward acquainting the leading agricultural workers of these areas with the objectives of the soil conservation program.

"County Agents, vocational teachers and Farm Security Administration unit supervisors in the counties touched by the above work gave freely of their time and efforts toward effectuating the program."

#### NEW BULLETIN ON FARM PLANNING

The "conservation farm plan" lies pretty close to the core of our entire effort. But to people outside the Service--to farmers and even technicians in other agencies--a "conservation farm plan" is too often nothing more than three words strung together. There is not enough widespread understanding of why these plans are needed, how they are developed and applied, and what they mean in day-to-day farming.

A publication that should go a long way toward giving the public a better understanding of the "conservation farm plan" is now in process and will be sent to field offices as soon as it becomes available. It's Miscellaneous Publication No. 411, "Working Plans for Permanent Farms", written by Glenn K. Rule of the Information Division in Washington. It describes the whole farm planning process and presents a detailed analysis of the actual plans on three widely separated farms.

#### CCC DRIVER TRAINING

Camp SCS-T-23, Marshall, Texas, has devised an interesting driver-training method. Before being recommended, a prospective driver is under the field foreman's observation for three months. While on the work crew if he shows qualities of dependability, reliability, industriousness and safety consciousness, he is given a driver's examination and road test. If he passes he is given a 60-day learner's permit under the supervision of a regular driver. When the learner has satisfied the mechanic, the field foreman, and the superintendent that he is a driver, he is assigned to a truck.

Roy K. Lagow, Camp Superintendent, says that "having 30 to 40 trained drivers available, keeps the regular drivers alert and active. They know that other good drivers are ready to take their places when they lose interest."

## THE BALANCE SHEET

From the *CHICAGO DAILY NEWS*, July 30, 1940:

"In the last year Americans have listened to millions of words about preserving this continent, or the Western Hemisphere, as a "sanctuary" of liberty and democracy. Too many of these discourses have been based upon the assumption that all that is necessary to that noble end is to abstain from war. Civilization is being destroyed in Europe, we are told. . . .

"Europe is wrecking buildings and machines. Europe is killing young men, and so undermining her biological foundations. But Europe is preserving her soil. In war and peace, she strives for greater output per acre, while our rule has been more output per man, employed, and to the devil with the soil!

"A nation is composed of two elements--folk and soil. Occasionally we have an admission of that in our country, but we go on wrecking our lands. In "Gone with the Wind", Scarlett's father reminds her that the land is the root of all, and the picture closes with a pretty "back to the land" climax--but the facts are that more than 100,000,000 acres of that very soil have long since gone with the wind, sacrificed to one-crop soil mining under the lash of usury.

"The other day a dispatch from New Canton, Ill., told how a study of silt in a catch basin near there showed that, on a 38,400-acre tract of Illinois land, farmers are losing eight tons of soil per acre every year from erosion. While we prattle of making our country into a sanctuary, the soil of the sanctuary is washing and blowing away. . . .

"But, in Western Europe, men still know how to farm so that the soil gets better, even if men grow worse. We might spare some of the condescension we have been lavishing upon the "homicidal maniacs" of Europe. They are not killing their land."

## SERVICE MEMBER WINS PHOTO CONTEST

Adrian C. Fox, Area biologist, Region 7, was among the winners in the "Camera Trails Contest" of *NATURE MAGAZINE* (October) with a picture of a red-winged blackbird on its nest.

According to the judges, "Mr. Fox's picture is specially noteworthy because of the fact that although circumstances forced him to work at a distance of several feet, ....the quality of the picture and the interesting way in which both the bird and its nest have been handled would not permit its exclusion from the winning list".

### CCC CLASSES PAYING THEIR WAY

Classes in agricultural subjects taught at the Yanceyville, North Carolina, CCC camp are literally paying their way. Since May the camp garden, a project of the classes, has supplied the company mess with a variety of fresh vegetables. A third acre plot produced 80 bushels of potatoes. The poultry husbandry class which started in April has sold the camp 438 pounds of fresh chicken, leaving a flock of 250 grown fryers ready for market. A new project in bee-keeping is underway.

### SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

The Division of Program Study and Discussion, BAE, in cooperation with the Office of Personnel, has arranged for five Schools of Philosophy for Agricultural Workers to be held during the next few months at various points over the country.

Four-day schools have been scheduled for Amarillo, October 13; for Berkeley, October 23; Chicago, October 29; Boston in early November; and Minneapolis, November 19. It is hoped that field members of SCS can arrange to attend the meetings in their localities.

### A correction--

August 1 issue of SERVICE NEWS, Page 12, in article "Experiment in Preserving Eucalyptus Posts", last sentence, read: "...eucalyptus seedlings are being planted beside the more expensive redwood posts that are expected to rot away during the next two or three years."

This statement could be interpreted to mean that redwood posts will rot away after a few years of service. Obviously this would be contrary to the facts since redwood posts have been known to last 75 years.

### FIELD MEMORANDA

OCT. 4 - OCT. 18;

- 848-B Supplementing definitions of classes of land according to use capability.
- 949 Suspension of bulk mailings from December 10 to December 26, 1940.
- 952 Covering absence from duty for draft registration.

- 954 Permitting employees to become members of selective service boards.

"As the Act definitely excludes Government employees from serving on local boards and appeal boards and agencies, the Department therefore, is without authority to approve such service."

- 951 Uniform project symbols.

- 953 Deduction for quarters in CCC Camps (Cancelling Field Memoranda 486, 566, 578, and 705.)

- 696-B Eight-hour Law - Applicability to contracts and laborers or mechanics of the Soil Conservation Service.

- 673-A Noncompetitive examinations: Frequency in connection with actions.

- 746-E Extension of authority to appoint skilled laborers under Public No. 441.

### PRINTERS' INK

The *Florida Times-Union*, October 7, reports on a poll taken by the Agricultural Extension Service among 1800 Georgia farmers. The question was: "Why do people burn the woods?" And the answers were:

- 357 reported that the woods were burned to obtain better grazing.
- 320 burned the woods to kill snakes and pests.
- 243 burned the woods to kill boll weevils.
- 118 burned during damp period to lessen fire hazard in dry season.
- 101 reported that their fires started from burning of fields, etc., in preparation for Spring planting.
- 319 "figured that people burned the woods because they didn't realize the damage being done."
- 45 burned woods to run out rabbits and other game.
- 44 "some folks do it just to see the blaze."

The other reasons were assorted, such as carelessness, smokers, etc.

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Harry R. O'Brien, and R. I. Throckmorton continue their article on "Our Changing Farm Map" in the *October Country Gentleman*. Writing on the

Great Plains area, they say that that region has led the rest of the country in adopting new methods, new equipment and new crops. Particular attention is paid to contour farming in Childress County, Texas, as well as terracing and contour farming in Seward County, Kansas. Fallowing in Golden Valley County, N. D., is considered at some length, as well as various crops, such as grain sorghums and Sudan grass.

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In its October issue *The Timberman* of Portland, Oregon is publishing an article by Frank B. Harper, Region 9 Division of Information, on the Oregon City, Oregon, farm forestry project.

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"Planimetric Mapping in the Soil Conservation Service" by William C. Cude, Division of Cartography, Washington, appeared in the July-August-September issue of *Photogrammetric Engineering*.

\* \* \*

"The Beaver--Friend of the Forest" by W. T. Cox, formerly Assistant Regional Biologist, Region 5, in the October issue of *American Forests* contains much of interest to those concerned with soil conservation. Mr. Cox was the author of "Woodland Caribou in Minnesota", *Soil Conservation*, December 1939.

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The following additional Project monographs have been received in the Service Library and are available for loan:

Region 5.

Illinois 3 - Freeport Project, Freeport, Illinois.

Iowa 2 - Farmersburg-McGregor Project, McGregor, Iowa.

Minnesota 4 - Prairie Creek Project, Faribault, Minnesota.

Missouri 3 - DuBois Demonstration Project, Washington, Missouri.

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The October issue of *Soil Science* contains an article entitled "Factors Affecting Aggregation of Cecil Soils and Effect of Aggregation on Run-off and Erosion" by Jesse Elson, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, and J. F. Lutz, Junior Soil Technologist, SCS.

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Erosion Survey No. 14, "Erosion and Related Land Use Conditions on the Lake Crook Watershed, Lamar County, Texas" by Harvey Oakes, Associate Soil Scientist, has been released.

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"Water and Soil Conservation Experiments at Spur, Texas" issued by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in cooperation with SCS as Bulletin 587, reports 14 years of work in a study of factors influencing run-off, erosion and the effects of conservation on plant growth

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Reprints of "Regeneration and Vegetative Propagation" by Charles F. Swingle, which appeared in *Botanical Review*, July, 1940, are available through the Service Publications Unit.

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*Hoard's Dairyman*, October 10, says that Kansas State College research workers have determined that only 50 percent of the rainfall is available for plant growth; that approximately 50 percent is lost through evaporation and run-off, much of which could be prevented by proper soil management and drainage.

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